

Should Deschutes library system change its expansion plans?

Pick a place to go to in fierce pursuit of excitement and, well, a meeting of the library board of the Deschutes Public Library system is not a good choice.

Last week, it would have been. A fight percolated over the future library expansion.

Bend City Councilor Anthony Broadman showed up. Bend Park & Recreation District Board member Ariel Mendez showed up. Louis Capozzi, board president of the Council on Aging of Central Oregon, showed up. Bill Gregoricus of the Central Oregon Coalition for Access showed up. And more.

That is not typical for a library board meeting. Not at all.

The visitors want the library board to change direction on its expansion plans. Many people agree the library needs to expand. Deschutes County voters passed a bond to pay for that expansion in the November election. But some don't like the concept the board has been pursuing of a big, new central library and regional libraries. The board's plans for the central library is to build on land it purchased near the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office off of U.S. Highway 20. Anne Ness, who won election to the library board in May but has not been sworn in, has called for a more decentralized approach to the expansion, arguing it would make it easier for everyone to access library resources.

The recording of Wednesday's meeting did not capture the public comments. The library district, though, did supply us with a copy of the draft minutes.

Broadman, speaking for himself and not the council, urged the library board to put the plan for the new central library on pause. He called on the board to invest in a permanent location for the East

Bend library. Mendez, also speaking for himself, made a similar point and appealed for more emphasis on neighborhood libraries.

Capozzi called on the board to reconsider its plans. "I find it enormously insulting that you are rolling forward with this timeline, ignoring serious concerns that are being raised by community leaders," he wrote using the written chat during the video meeting. We should note Capozzi is an investor in The Bulletin. (He also submitted a related guest column that we thought you may want to read. It appears nearby on this page, if you are reading the print version of the newspaper.)

In response, library board member Ray Miao, who had concerns about the library bond, made a motion to keep the East Bend library open after the central library was built. Board member Ann Malkin told him the visitor comment section of the meeting was not the appropriate place to make a motion. She pointed out no decision has been made to close the East Bend library — it was just a recommendation from consultants. The library has also announced it will renew the lease on the East Bend library for the next five years.

Don't expect that meeting to be the end of the debate. What do people want the district to do? Stick with the plan? More decentralization? Would some feel misled if the library changed direction now because it would not be the plan they thought they voted for? You can tell board members what you think by emailing them at board@deschuteslibrary.org.

Changes coming for Bend neighborhoods

Duplexes and triplexes in Bend could have no required off-street parking. Quadplexes could have as few as one required off-street space. Requirements for landscaping for duplexes and triplexes could go away.

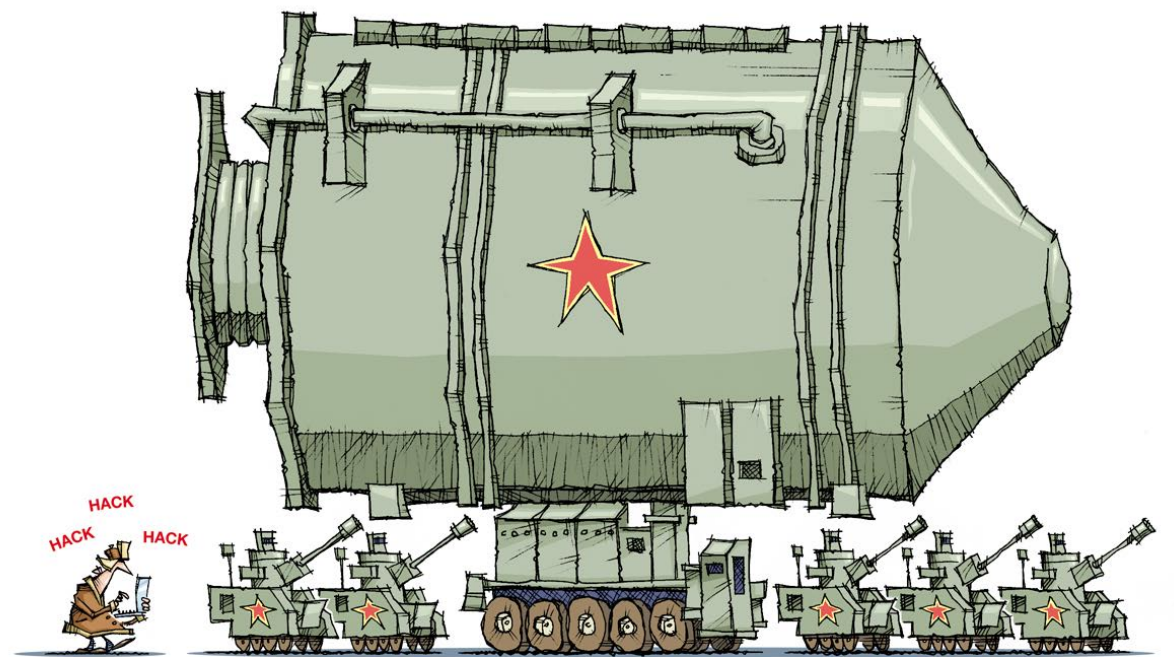
Those are just some of the proposed changes coming before the Bend Planning Commission on Monday. It's part of the city's effort to comply with state law, House Bill 2001, passed in 2019.

That law requires cities of Bend's size to allow more duplexes, tri-

plexes, quadplexes, townhomes and cottage clusters in more places in the city. It's to increase housing choice and supply.

Before you scream that plan goes too far, Bend doesn't have a lot of choice. It's the law or the city is following state recommendations. But if you want to learn more, you can tune in and watch the planning commission go through the changes and even comment. More information is available here: www.bendoregon.gov/government/committees/planning-commission.

Tim Capozzi
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RUSSIAN WEAPONRY ON PARADE

Library board should rework expansion

BY LOUIS CAPOZZI

An open letter to the Deschutes Public Library system board: On behalf of older adults in Central Oregon, I am writing to urge you to reconsider your plan for the proposed new central library.

There are a number of concerns affecting our aging population regarding the location and the plan.

First, putting more than 60% of the bond proceeds into one large facility shortchanges the community libraries across Deschutes County. Those local libraries are critical resources for not only older adults, but for children, the disabled and the disadvantaged. We strongly prefer that more resources be put into expansion and enhancement of our community libraries, where your key audiences reside.

Second, the location you have chosen puts the majority of the library's resources well out of reach for those same groups. Local libraries that are accessible by walking, public transit or short car rides are far preferable to a facility out on a highway, well out of practical reach for many older residents.

How would an elderly person in La Pine make the 60-mile round trip to the location you have chosen?

Third, your extensive research on the community's needs was done be-

GUEST COLUMN

You are asking the residents of Deschutes County to pay a 60% increase in their library taxes. You must use those funds responsibly to serve the interests of people with all levels of ability, not just those who can drive to a remote facility in a car.

fore the impact of the pandemic. We are sure that outreach today would not show the same appetite for large meeting rooms and public spaces. We urge you to conduct further outreach, especially to older adults, parents, the disabled and the disadvantaged.

It is especially concerning to me that you are not planning to build a new East Bend library, and that you have made no commitments to keeping the facility open past the end of the lease. Just a few weeks ago, the Bend City Council adopted the Southeast Area Plan, which envisions creating a "complete community" A library would be an important asset for the thousands of older adults who

will reside in this area.

You are asking the residents of Deschutes County to pay a 60% increase in their library taxes. You must use those funds responsibly to serve the interests of people with all levels of ability, not just those who can drive to a remote facility in a car. Please put more of your resources into our local, community libraries and reconsider the location of your new "central library," if we really need one, to a more central and accessible area.

In the May election, your board president, Martha Lawler, a strong advocate for the central library plan, was rejected by the voters in South County by 10 points.

Her opponent, Anne Ness, raised serious questions about your plans and advocates for more resources to be devoted to our local libraries. On Anne's website she said: "The COVID pandemic has dramatically demonstrated how much we need community connections. At a time when social, technological and economic forces threaten to isolate us, local libraries help to connect us."

I urge you to slow down, take the pulse of the post-COVID community, and reconsider your plans.

■ Louis Capozzi is board president of the Council on Aging of Central Oregon and an investor in The Bulletin.

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column
P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

I'm a woman who runs on rural roads, and the fear is always there

BY NATALIE RUTH JOYNTON

Special to The Washington Post

I live in rural northern Michigan, a region celebrated for its cherry orchards, shoreline state parks and small-town tourist attractions. People travel from all over the United States to experience what I do every day on my regular morning run: the mist rising off the water, the towering beech trees, the rolling hills. Each day running these dirt roads restores my sense of wonder.

Mollie Tibbetts was also a rural runner, a college student spending her summer back in her tiny hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa.

On July 18, 2018, she went for an evening jog. At some point during her run, according to police reports, a man circled her several times in his car. He later admitted to investigators that he got out of his car and ran after her, became angry when she threatened to call the police — and then blacked out, awakening and finding Tibbetts' body in the trunk of his car. He drove to a nearby cornfield, police said, and left her body covered with corn stalks. She had been stabbed to death.

Sydney Sutherland, 25, was running on a rural road in Arkansas last year when she was abducted, raped and murdered, police said. Attacks can happen anywhere that a solitary woman is jogging: Wendy Martinez, 35, stabbed to death on a District of Columbia street in 2019; Karina Vetrano, 30, sexually assaulted and choked to death in a park near her home in Queens in 2016; Vanessa Marcotte, 27, found strangled in the woods near a rural road in Massachusetts where she had been running in 2016. The list goes on and on. In March, a 22-year-old woman jogging near a Nashville park eluded two men who tried to pull her into a minivan, police said.

This is my greatest fear as a woman who runs. Out here, it isn't the black bears or the rumored cougars or even the occasional aggressive farm dog (I've negotiated a few). It's the moment a single truck I don't know turns down the dirt road where I'm running.

On May 28, the man arrested in Tibbetts' killing was found guilty of first-degree murder. For many, his brief trial was a reminder of a tragic

case from what seems like a lifetime ago, well before the pandemic. But I've been thinking of Mollie for three years now. Long stretches of woods and fields loll between the farmhouses here, and any time a vehicle I don't recognize turns toward me, I think of Mollie.

One time while I was running, a truck slowed to a crawl right next to me. I stopped and turned to face the vehicle. It was a rusty red Ford, and I remember immediately telling myself to get ready to read the license plate. A blond man of about 30 rolled down his window. He smiled and hinted that he wanted my number. He was smoking; I watched his ash land near my shoes.

Would he get out? And if so, what then?

I run with my big dog and carry pepper spray, and I'd like to believe both would make a difference. In the Sutherland case, police said the attacker first hit her with his pickup truck.

Each of the incidents above could have sparked a national conversation about this brand of predation on women, which includes not only le-

I am still waiting for that conversation about why simply seeking outdoor exercise is a mortal danger for women. And I am still running these dirt roads, because this is where I live — one of the most beautiful parts of America — and I enjoy that morning run far too much to give it up. Sometimes, when I come back from a run, my 7-year-old daughter is on the porch, wearing her "fast shoes." "Race me," she says, and we do, all the way down to the barn.

thal cases, but widespread nonlethal harassment. But they didn't. Mollie's murder, for one, occurred during the Trump administration, and instead the president focused on the immigration status of her killer — even though immigrants who are in the country illegally are far less likely to commit crimes than U.S.-born citizens.

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Sometimes, when I come back

from a run, my 7-year-old daughter is on the porch, wearing her "fast shoes." "Race me," she says, and we do, all the way down to the barn. My daughter loves to run. Like me, she was born with strong, short legs. Occasionally I find her outside, hollering "Ready, set, go!" to herself and sprinting off, focused and joyful.

Watching her makes me smile, but it also makes me wonder when she'll discover the fear every woman who runs — every woman, period — endures on a daily basis. And how and when to weigh it against doing the things we love.

■ Natalie Ruth Joynton is the author of the memoir "Welcome to Replica Dodge."